

STORIES TO TELL

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PREFACE

Stories help us understand others and ourselves. By absorbing stories, we develop the ability to put ourselves in others' shoes and to understand what is important and what has influence. Stories enrich our lives and give them direction. This is especially true for the stories that have proven their impact. These are therefore stories that need to be told. Like the stories in this book.

NIHARIKA

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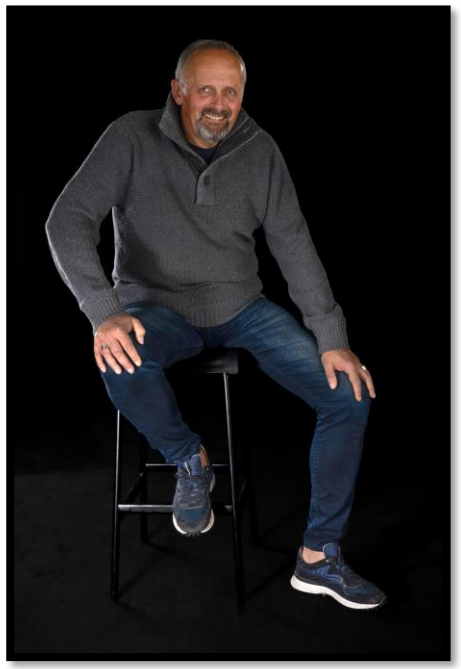


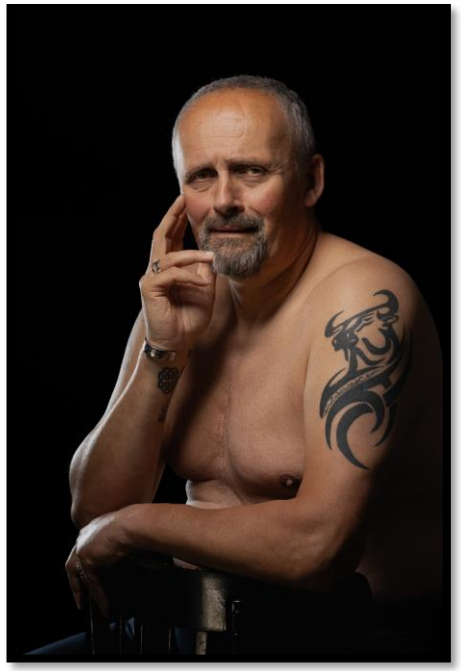


“Niharika has had a degenerative muscle disease since she was 11. Although her muscles are weak, it doesn’t stop her from living her life to the fullest. She is forced to hold objects differently than a healthy person would. She also wears orthopedic shoes and sometimes needs a few days to recover if she has overdone it. But she is grateful that she can live independently in her own home, has a great job and can live her life with a smile.”

HENDRIK

HENDRIK







“Time was ticking for Hendrik, his heart was a bomb waiting to explode. He thought he was fit and healthy, however one day, he collapsed on the tennis court. He doesn’t remember any of it, only to wake up at the hospital with his wife by his side. After 2 major operations, he now has several scars, the biggest on his chest. Hendrik has a different perspective of life now; it is more fragile than he thought. It used to bother him, what was happening in the world, but when you look death in the eyes, these problems don’t matter as much, as you have your own problems to deal with.”

EMY

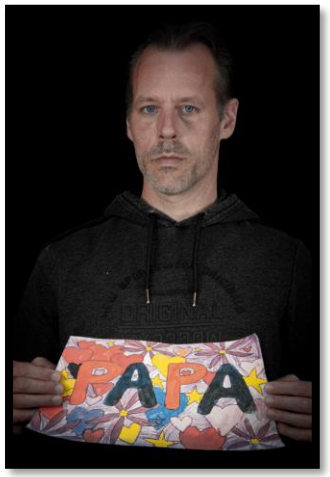
EMY



“Emy is the kind of person always looking for the best version of herself; as such, she made the decision to emigrate. In Greece, she would not get the opportunities that she would have in the Netherlands. And those possibilities have come true. But to do this, she had to leave her friends and family and live in a place where she knew no one. This turned out to be a huge sacrifice, loneliness and isolation being present in the first years. As time is passing, she is growing deeper roots and has found peace, even when nostalgia gnaws at her sometimes.”

PETER

PETER

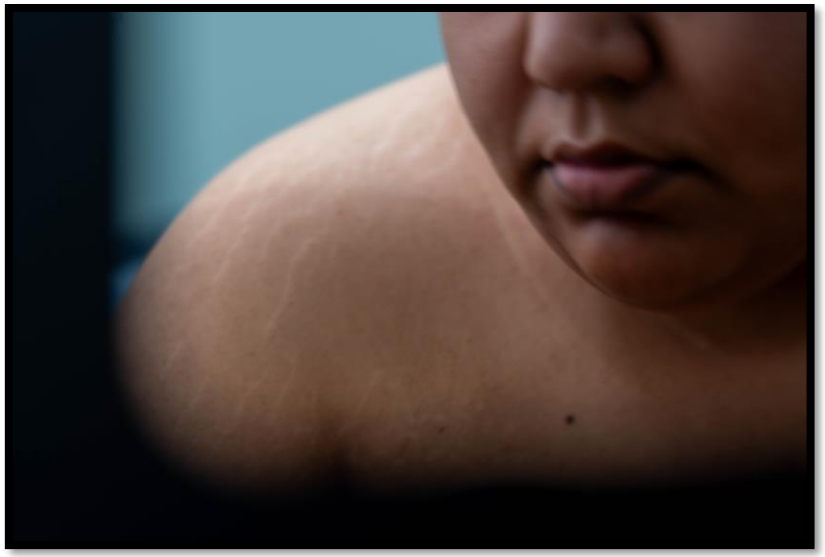






“Your little girl suddenly becomes very ill and ends up in the hospital. Then the unthinkable happens and you have to watch how the doctors and nurses fight for her life. I experienced how my world could be turned into a complete nightmare in a few seconds, without any warning. Having to experience that as a parent, watching helplessly, is the worst thing I have ever had to experience. The fate of my little girl in the hands of someone else. Fortunately, she survived and is busy playing, going to school and doing crafts. But the scars inside me will remain forever.”

GITA

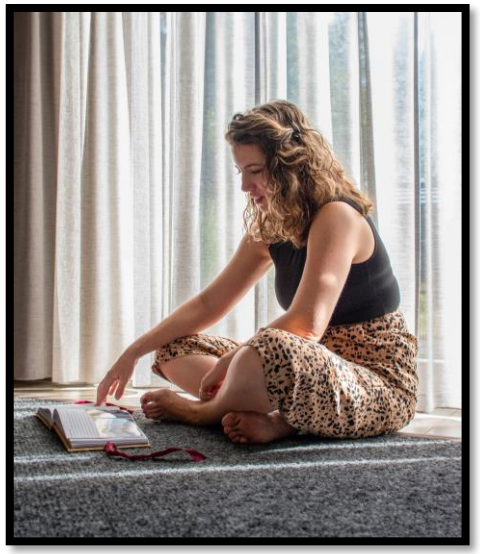
GITA

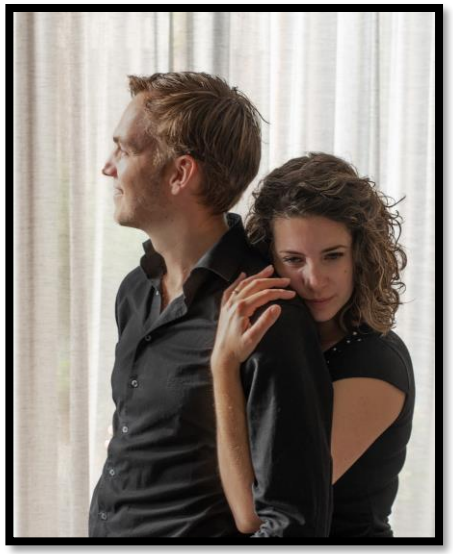




“Gita enrolled in an introductory photography course at the, hoping to become more familiar with her camera and perhaps make a few friends in her new town. However, this course transformed her life, providing her with a powerful means to express her perspective of the world. When she takes pictures, she transcends her insecurities about her weight and stretch marks, shedding the constant feelings of inadequacy, and underachievement. Photography has become her sanctuary, empowering her to see and share the beauty in herself and her view of the world. ”

INGE

INGE



“Christmas time is a happy time for many people, for Inge it was no different. However, 2017 had other plans for her. A first brain hemorrhage on December 21st, the second on the 22nd. Inge was 30 and was admitted to the hospital. Inge still has mixed feelings about Christmas. Though Christmas will never be the same, Inge celebrates it with a heart full of gratitude, finding warmth in the moments that truly matter and count the most for Inge.”

FIONA

FIONA



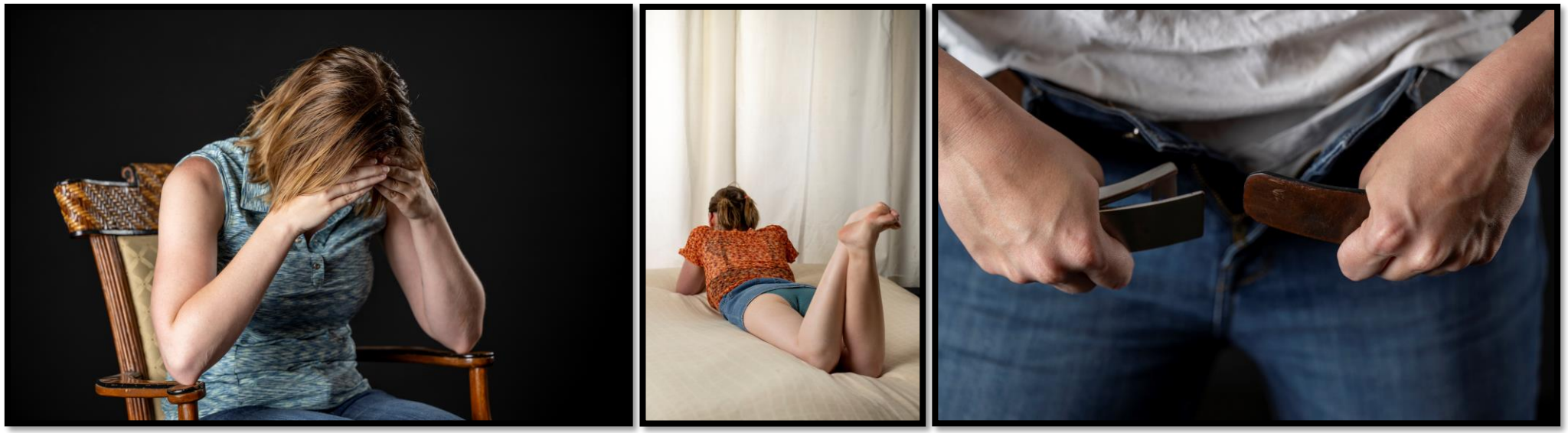




“This summer, Fiona graduated from high school, marking a pivotal moment in her life. Just over a year ago, she moved to Apeldoorn and quickly made friends despite knowing no one initially. Her graduation is more than a ceremonial conclusion; it signifies the beginning of a new journey. Fiona has decided to pursue Social Work, a choice that opens the door to new experiences, friendships, and opportunities. As she embarks on this path, her friends are also setting off on their own educational journeys, each heading to different institutions. This transition represents a significant phase of growth and change for Fiona.”

PAULA

PAULA

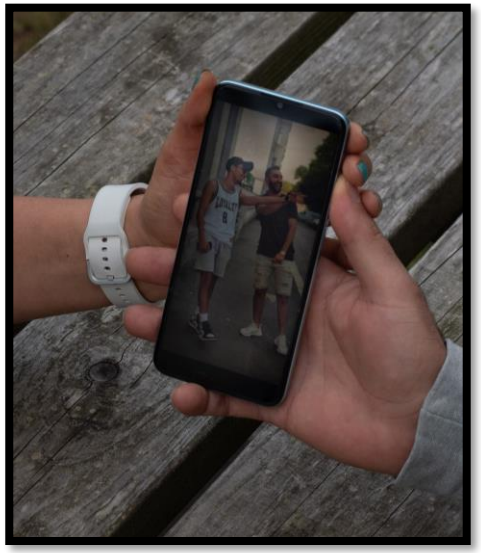


“When Paula was eleven years old, she was abused at home by her mother's boyfriend. She was pushed down, and her skirt was lifted. After an initial resistance she froze and dared not to do anything against what would follow. When she told her mother what had happened after returning home, her mother consulted her boyfriend and believed that Paula had provoked it herself. From that moment on, not only the relationship with her mother broke down, it was also more difficult for her to continue her school career, she felt constantly threatened and she would constantly experience problems in relationships with men to this day.”

AHMAD

AHMAD






“Ahmad fled Syria with his wife and two sons, driven by the desire to give them a safer future. He said happiness doesn't come from a big job, but from enjoying small, spontaneous moments that provide freedom. His wife, who had been alone for eight months, held on for the sake of the children. It has been a difficult time, but despite everything, they built a new life together. Laughter and persistence are they key ingredients. Would they ever go back to Syria? Everything has changed, however that question pops up ever so now and then.”

PURA

PURA





“I knew I was going to have a risky procedure. The risk was evident from multiple cardiac arrests during the procedure. That brought me to a place between life and death. Here I experienced a feeling of peace and intense calm that I wanted to stay in. Until I was stopped by a loved one from my past who gently pushed me back to life and I woke up in the middle of the operation. “Shit! I’m alive again,” was my first thought. Followed by feelings of guilt because I had forgotten my role as a woman and mother due to the peace and quiet.”

EPILOGUE

There's no doubt. Everyone who has reached the age of thirty has experienced drastic things. Things that made us sad, things that sometimes turned our lives around. But also events that made us feel happy, proud, useful or loved.

Because this happens to everyone and because they are such determining things, they are important to tell. We may not recognize ourselves in the exact same situation, but we do recognize the feelings and impact. That’s why they are the stories to tell.